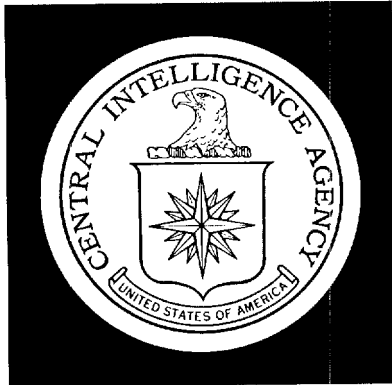


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FINLAND: The split within the Communist Party may lead to its withdrawal from the government coalition.

The minority conservative faction of the party has consistently opposed the tripartite economic stabilization agreement. This accord, painfully worked out between labor, management, and government after the 1967 devaluation, imposes strict controls on price and wage increases. Charging the majority liberals with selling out the interests of the workers, the conservatives threatened to form their own party following their defeat at the 1969 party congress. Only under Soviet pressure did the two groups agree to submerge their differences early this year and conduct a unified parliamentary election campaign.

Disenchantment with the establishment role played by the liberals in the government was reflected in the lowest election turnout the party has received since the war. The conservatives laid sole responsibility for this setback at the liberals' door and, eager to discredit them still further, resumed their campaign against the economic stabilization agreement, using even harsher and more vitriolic language.

The liberals were stunned when the conservatives broke party discipline in a government confidence vote on a bill clearing the way for extension of the agreement. They threatened to force the minority out of the party if it does not cease such violations of party law. The Soviets, determined to prevent this, have printed several articles in Trud and Pravda supporting the conservatives, and in a central committee letter to party chairman Saarinen placed the blame on the liberals for the re-emergence of an open split.

So far the liberals seem determined to retain control of the party and to pursue their role as a responsible coalition partner. They have been encouraged in this by the defection of some of the

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more prominent party members from the conservative group as the latter hardened its position. Moscow, however, is now intent on backing the conservatives, even if one eventual effect of this effort is an early Communist departure from the government.

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